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Woodlawn High Student to Perform National Anthem in American Sign Language

BATON ROUGE, La. — Woodlawn High School 10th-grader Thu Tran will make school history Friday night as she performs the national anthem in American Sign Language just before kickoff of the Panthers' 7 p.m. home football game against Central.

Thu will be the first student at the school to sign the anthem at a football game. She is also the first deaf student to participate in JROTC at Woodlawn.

"I believe that we are learning how to not just have our deaf students survive in EBRPSS but thrive in EBRPSS," said Dr. Ashley Argrave, audiologist and deaf and hard-of-hearing educator in the district. "Thu has challenged me as an educator and challenged our school to think deeply about how we are accommodating students. With students like Thu who set high expectations, we as a district must raise our bar too."

A New Orleans native, Thu transferred to Woodlawn from the Louisiana School for the Deaf. She is enrolled in Advanced Placement government, Great Scholars geometry, English and talented art. She is also active in Student Government and is the founder of Woodlawn's first-ever American Sign Language Club. Argrave said it is one of two ASL clubs launched this year in EBR Schools.

Beyond her academic and extracurricular involvement, Thu aspires to attend an Ivy League university on a full scholarship and pursue a career as a medical malpractice attorney. She also enjoys creating tactile art designed for blind and deafblind individuals to experience.

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